Competing Memories

The aftermath of modern conflicts, deeply rooted in political, economic, and social structures, leaves pervasive and often recurring legacies of violence. Addressing past injustice is therefore fundamental not only for societal well-being and peace but also for future conflict prevention. In recent years, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have become important but contentious mechanisms for conflict resolution and reconciliation. This book fills a significant gap, examining the importance of context within transitional justice and peace-building. It lays out long-term and often unexpected indirect effects of formal and informal justice processes. Offering a novel conceptual understanding of “procedural reconciliation” on the societal level, it features an in-depth study of Commissions in Peru and Sierra Leone, providing a critical analysis of the contribution and challenges facing transitional justice in societies recovering from conflict. It will be of interest to scholars and students of comparative politics, international relations, human rights, and conflict studies.

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Competing Memories

*Truth and Reconciliation in Sierra Leone and Peru*

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The remote village of Uchuraccay, Ayacucho, was deserted during Peru’s decades of political violence, following severe attacks from the Shining Path and military. At the right is the Santuario de la Paz y Reconciliación (Sanctuary of Peace and Reconciliation), commemorating the attack on eight journalists, mainly from the capital, and their guide on January 26, 1983. Although subject to high-level investigations, responsibility for the attack remains disputed and many have criticized the little attention generated by villagers’ experiences of violence before and since the attack. Where women head many of the homes in the village, the photo signifies resilience and hope in the women’s rebuilding of life and community. It also highlights the politics of voice and representation, where residents of the region remain isolated and struggle to navigate the difficult realities of daily life. Photo taken by author in October 2010.
Abbreviations and Definitions

Afectado  Individual affected by political violence (Peru)
AFRC    Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Sierra Leone)
ANC    African National Congress (South African political party)
ANFASEP    Asociación Nacional de Familiares de Secuestrados, Detenidos y Desaparecidos del Perú (Organization in Ayacucho for relatives of victims, Peru)
APC    All People’s Congress (Political party, Sierra Leone)
APRA    Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (Political party, Peru)
Campesinos Peasants (Spanish)
CDCs    Civil defense committees (Sierra Leone)
COSMA    La Comisión de Salud Mental de Ayacucho (Mental health organization in Ayacucho, set up as a follow-up to the CVR's mental health reparations plan, Peru)
CVR    Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Peru)
DDR    Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
ECOMOG Economic Community of West African States
EPAF    Equipo Peruano Antropológico Forénisco (Forensic anthropology organization, Peru)
Fambul Tok Family Talk (Translated from Krio. Community-level reconciliation project, run by Forum of Conscience, Sierra Leone)
ICC    International Criminal Court
ICTR    International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
List of Abbreviations and Definitions

ICTY  
International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

IDEHPUCP  
El Instituto de Democracia y Derechos Humanos de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, Peru)

IPAC  
Instituto de Promoción Agropecuaria y Comunal (Agrarian and development NGO, Peru)

Kamajor  
Traditional Mende hunters (Sierra Leone)

La Colina  
Death squad made up of armed forces under President Fujimori and National Intelligence Director, Vladimiro Montesinos (Peru)

MOVADEF  
Movimiento Por Amnistía y Derechos Fundamentales (Movement for Amnesty and Fundamental Rights, Peru)

MRTA  
Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (Tupac Amaru Movement, Peru)

NACSA  
The National Commission for Social Action (Reparations Commission, Sierra Leone)

NFHR  
National Forum for Human Rights (Sierra Leone)

NGO  
Non-governmental organization

NPCC  
National Provisional Ruling Council

PUCP  
Pontificia Católica del Perú (Catholic University, Peru)

Pueblos Jóvenes  
Shanty Towns (Peru)

Rondas Campesinas  
Peasant patrol groups (Peru)

RUF  
Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)

Sendero Luminoso  
Shining Path (Peru)

SCSL  
Special Court for Sierra Leone

SLA  
Sierra Leone Army

SLPP  
Sierra Leone People’s Party

TRC  
Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UNSCH  
Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga